

THE EUGENICS REVIEW

*Editorial Offices: The Eugenics Society,
69 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1.
(Telephone—Victoria 2091.)*

Editor for the Society—Maurice Newfield.

“Eugenics is the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally.”

NOTES OF THE QUARTER

THE April issues of the REVIEW are always concerned with internal affairs of the *Eugenics Society*. They are taken up with such matters as the Annual Report, the proceedings at the Annual Meeting, and the balance of the *Society's* income and expenditure. Such formal matter-of-fact records are true to the letter but tell little, if anything, of the spirit, and it seems fitting to supplement them by some account of the manner in which the *Society* has envisaged and fulfilled its obligations in the period to which they refer.

The past year is best regarded as one of transition—of progress, definite though so far unspectacular, from the very restricted activities that expressed the decisions taken by the Council at the outbreak of war to the full programme of eugenic endeavour that now lies before us. We can now appreciate how justly the Council appraised the narrow limits within which the *Society* would have to move when the hazards were so great and the outlook so uncertain. The position of the *Eugenics Society* was not in any way comparable with that of organizations which were concerned exclusively with short-term

policies that could be implemented there and then, with a reasonable expectation of large profits and quick returns. The war-time expansion—inevitable and highly desirable—of some of these organizations (for instance, those with educational and legislative schemes for the prevention of the venereal diseases or of tuberculosis) was sometimes held up to the *Society* as a reproach; but in fact we would gladly have followed their admirable example if, like them, we had immediate benefits to offer. The outbreak of war, when the nation was faced with new and desperately urgent problems and with perils of unpredictable magnitude, seemed hardly the right moment, however, for engaging the public interest in the biological endowment of its remote posterity; but it was an obvious opportunity, for those equipped to take advantage of it, to promote and obtain public support for measures designed to protect the health of the men and women, in the forces and in industry, on whose capacity for their appointed tasks we depended for our very existence. A reasonable compromise was called for between two extreme courses: between, on the one hand, temporarily suspending all the *Society's* activities, and, on the other, proclaiming as the *Society's* slogan “Business as—if not more than—usual,” and thus riding the tide of increased public receptivity for unfamiliar ideas so characteristic of war-time. In the light of all that has happened since, we can see how realistic was the decision to maintain a skeleton organization, continue to publish the REVIEW, and immediately appoint a Committee to study the eugenic aspects of family allowances. Such an organization, under the direction of a specially appointed Emergency Committee, was flexible enough to respond to the trend of events and to changes in the public mood.

It was in the best sense of the term opportunist—stripped for whatever useful action might be called for, but not inclined to waste its energies in beating the air.

* * *

There were other reasons for preferring such a waiting policy. At the outbreak of war Dr. C. P. Blacker, on whom, to quote our President, "we lean so heavily and so justifiably," returned to the army; and with his departure there had to be, whether we had wanted it or not, an end to all activities which had depended for success on his unique endowment of energy, knowledge and experience. His absence also set an obvious limit on proposals for new activities, such as came regularly before the Emergency Committee in the first year or two of the war. The *Eugenics Society* could only afford to undertake tasks that it was equipped to carry through supremely well. By the quality of its work it had earned, not easily but gradually and laboriously over the years, a high reputation which had stood it in good stead whenever it attempted to influence government policies and the trend of events in eugenically favourable directions; and it was imperative to do nothing that might jeopardize this reputation and leave the *Society* with the formidable task of building it up again after the war. Schemes calling for the day-to-day application of expert knowledge, for resource, for a lively awareness of the precise moment for pressing forward this or that aspect of eugenic policy would, it was felt, have to await Dr. Blacker's return; meanwhile a few modest tasks well done seemed just as much as the *Society* could, or in the circumstances need, strive after.

The balance sheet published elsewhere in this issue epitomizes the financial advantages derived from this timely retrenchment. In the pre-war years the *Society*—in the fulfilment of a planned policy of expansion—had lived, with a full sense of what this involved, beyond its income. It had initiated, carried out, fostered and co-operated in costly schemes of research, all to the great enhancement of its prestige but resulting in deep

inroads into its capital resources. The pursuit of a course so bold and unorthodox called for vision, a capacity to weigh immediate risks against ultimate advantages, and not least a profound knowledge of financial operations; and in this critical phase of its development it was the *Society's* inestimable good fortune to be guided, in the disposition of its investments and income, by one who possessed them all. When conditions were favourable, Mr. C. F. Chance encouraged generous but well-ordered spending; at the outbreak of war, again under his firm guidance, the *Society* decided to recruit its financial resources against the time when it could profitably resume full activity.

Thus—to sum up—a combination of circumstances at the outbreak of the war moved the Council to suspend some of the activities of the *Society* and restrict others. Nevertheless, the *Society* has continued to fulfil its primary function and has undertaken such tasks as it could with the limited personnel at its disposal. In face of all difficulties it has continued in being and has been prepared, at a favourable turn in events, to assume further responsibilities. In fact, as briefly recorded in the Annual Report, it has already done so.

* * *

An unexpected opportunity for development came in October 1942, when Dr. Blacker, after over three years with the Forces, was seconded from the army to take up an appointment at the Ministry of Health, London, and thus found himself in a position to devote his spare time to the work of the *Society*. From every point of view this was a timely change. Dr. Blacker was at last charged with duties—the co-ordination on behalf of the Emergency Medical Service of a survey of facilities in England and Wales for dealing with the problem of the neuroses—which gave full scope to his organizing abilities and his special experience of psychological medicine; and the *Society* was able to use his services at a moment when they were much needed. The Executive Committee at once appointed him Honorary Secretary of the *Society* and, subject to the

Council's approval, he will hold this post as long as the conditions of his work permit.

For some months before this the Emergency Committee had been actively debating the desirability of appointing a new committee to survey demographic problems and bring the essential facts before the public. The prime mover in this enterprise was Mr. R. M. Titmuss who, actively supported by Dr. A. J. Lewis and Mrs. Hubback, urged the formation of such a committee, with the further recommendation that its terms of reference should include such matters of demographic consequence as scales of children's allowances under all government and municipal services, family allowances schemes, and post-war housing. An alternative suggestion, put forward later by Professor A. M. Carr-Saunders and Dr. Julian Huxley, that an attempt should be made to revive the Population Investigation Committee and the Population Policies Committee (which, though not formally disbanded, had not met since the outbreak of war) was also considered, and the Emergency Committee agreed that one or other of these proposals should be adopted.

At this interesting point Dr. Blacker returned and, at the Emergency Committee's request and with the full approval of Mr. Titmuss and his supporters, set himself the task of, if possible, reforming the two population committees. In this endeavour he was encouraged by the obvious signs of a re-awakened public interest in problems of fertility; by the *Society's* decision to help the committees financially; and by the happy coincidence of Mr. D. V. Glass's return from America on the very day of his own return to London from the army. He was also fortunate in securing the immediate collaboration of a War-time Emergency Committee of the Population Investigation Committee, consisting of Professor A. M. Carr-Saunders (Chairman), Lord Horder, Sir Charles Arden-Close and Mr. L. J. Cadbury, with himself as honorary secretary.

Moreover, although the Population Investigation Committee had not met during the war, many of its activities had been carried to completion and some were still in

progress when the first steps were taken to reconstitute it as an active body with a programme adapted to war-time demographic problems. Thus, in May 1940, the second and much enlarged edition of Mr. D. V. Glass's work, under the title *Population Policies and Movements in Europe*, was published by the Oxford University Press; in the same year Dr. Grace Leybourne's work, *Education and the Birth Rate*, written jointly with Mr. Kenneth White, was published by Jonathan Cape; and in June 1942 Dr. M. J. Elsas's *Housing Before the War and After* was published by King & Staples and shortly after went into a second edition. During the war, too, Dr. R. R. Kuczynski continued his inquiries into the demographic problems of the colonial empire; Dr. Moshinsky completed her report on housing experiments in foreign countries; Miss W. Burt, representative of the Midwives' Institute on the Committee, collected a considerable body of data on the costs of child-bearing; and Mr. R. H. Pear, Darwin Research Fellow of the *Eugenics Society*, submitted a full report on his inquiry into the problems of approach to marriage.

It was not to be expected that the Population Policies Committee, with its very different constitution and objectives, would show any comparable back-room activity. By the summer of 1939 Mr. François Lafitte, Secretary of the Committee, had drafted, under guidance of a study group, about two-thirds of a comprehensive report, with a view to its publication some time in 1940 in the same general form as the reports of P.E.P., with which he was working on other subjects. This plan was shelved on the outbreak of war, when, for one thing, the energies of everyone connected with the Population Policies Committee were deflected to other matters and, for another, the chances of publication for such material seemed hardly worth counting on. Fortunately, Mr. Lafitte, though now busily occupied on the editorial staff of *The Times*, is still prepared to carry the work to completion; and the provision of the necessary technical assistance and specialist advice (e.g. on medicine, education and housing) was one of the

problems before the War-time Emergency Committee convened by Dr. Blacker.

* * *

The first meeting of the Committee, on November 17th, 1942, was concerned with a definition of aims. Briefly, the question was whether the Committee, assuming that it decided to become active again, should confine itself strictly to the investigation of population problems, or whether it should also concern itself with devising and possibly espousing population policies. Among the factors bearing on this decision, four in particular call for mention. First, with the library of the London School of Economics no longer available and competent research workers otherwise engaged, the facilities for research are no longer what they were. Secondly, when the social determinants of our demographic future change rapidly and in unpredictable directions, as they are changing now, the scope of research becomes necessarily limited and the precise formulation of subjects for research extremely difficult. Thirdly, with the accelerated tempo of social change there arises a widespread demand for new policies (such as those embodied in the Beveridge Report, for instance), but a general indisposition to await the results of protracted fact-finding investigations. And, finally, there seems less good reason than before the war for separating the function of promoting research from that of devising policies.

Thus, the Committee, if revived, could concentrate exclusively on such research as formerly came within the scope of the Population Investigation Committee; or, drastically widening its scope, it could decide to formulate and promote, by propaganda and other means, a specific "natality programme" or positive population policy; or it could simply add the consideration of population policies to its function without committing itself to any particular policy or programme, or indeed, without fundamentally modifying any of the original aims of the Population Investigation Committee.

Some reasons against the first of these courses have already been mentioned. Against the second, it could be urged that

the Committee would not find it easy to agree on a single policy or combination of policies, or could so agree only by forfeiting its present representational character. It is certain that some of the important organizations represented on the Committee would withdraw their support rather than involve themselves in a programme which might become the subject of political controversy.

There was left, therefore, the third course, and this the war-time Emergency Committee approved unanimously at its meeting on January 15th, 1943. There was here no question of making a fundamental change in the aims and activities of the Population Investigation Committee, which remained as before an investigating body but now included policies within the purview of its investigations. Thus, to its original purpose, which was "to examine the trends of population in Great Britain and the Colonies and to investigate the causes of these trends with special reference to the fall in the birth rate," the Committee now added two others, first, "to examine the policies adopted in other countries with a view to raising fertility," and secondly, "to encourage the study, in the light of her special needs, of such population policies as may be advocated in Great Britain."

"The proposed attitude," stated the Committee in a Memorandum, "might be compared to that of the Medical Research Council, which embraces in its province not only the aetiology, pathology, epidemiology, prevention, etc., of disease, but also its treatment. As a body, however, it does not advocate one form of treatment in preference to another. The M.R.C. publishes the results of its investigations and leaves the matter at that. The analogy, while imperfect, may serve to illustrate how the Committee might include in its activities a study of population policies without committing itself to one policy in preference to another. As a body it would scrupulously avoid espousing any policy or programme, and would undertake no propaganda." To this it may perhaps be added that the Committee uses the term propaganda in its precise sense of "a concerted movement for the propagation of a

particular doctrine or practice." It does not exclude from its activities the publication of factual and even of controversial material (as long as it made clear that such material does not necessarily express the Committee's own views) or the provision of useful information to those—for instance, Members of Parliament—on whom the responsibility for the working out, and ultimately enactment, of demographic policies must fall.

* * *

This, briefly, is the background of the events recorded in the Annual Report. The *Eugenics Society* not only took the initiative in reviving the Population Investigation Committee but, by a grant of £500 a year for two years, made itself responsible for a considerable share of its running expenses. The Committee, if it is to sponsor programmes of work submitted for and securing its approval, will still have to seek other sources of income, but it already feels secure enough to go ahead with confidence. It has been fortunate in enlisting the services of Dr. M. J. Elsas as Research Secretary in place of Mr. D. V. Glass, who is unable to act in this capacity during the war. Dr. Elsas has an

impressive record of achievement to his credit, including the research on housing referred to earlier in these Notes, studies on national income for the Institute of Economic and Social Research, and staff appointments to Chatham House and the Institute of Statistics, Oxford. It is pleasant to state that Mr. Glass has agreed to serve on the Committee and that Mr. Titmuss has also been co-opted as a member.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lafitte is completing his report on population policies with the assistance of Dr. J. Isaac (who has worked for some years on population problems at the London School of Economics and produced a Ph.D. thesis on international migration with special reference to its economic aspects) and under the direction of a small "steering group," consisting mainly of members of the pre-war committee. No attempt is being made to revive the joint committee of the *Eugenics Society* and P.E.P., and it is intended that with the publication of this report the work of the Population Policies Committee, as an organization separate from the Population Investigation Committee, will come to an end.

PHYSIOLOGICAL ZOÖLOGY

Articles appearing in forthcoming issues :

REACTIVITIES OF COLPODA DUODENARIA TO ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS. II. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FORMATION OF RESTING CYSTS. By C. V. TAYLOR and A. G. R. STRICKLAND, Stanford University.

RETARDATION OF EARLY CLEAVAGE OF URECHIS BY ULTRA-VIOLET LIGHT. By ARTHUR C. GIESE, Stanford University.

ON THE KILLING ACTION OF OPTICALLY ISOMERIC NICOTINES IN RELATION TO PROBLEMS OF EVOLUTION OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM IN ANIMALS. By G. F. GAUSE and N. P. SMARAGDOVA, Institute of Zoölogy, University of Moscow.

THE PRODUCTION OF DUPLICITAS CRUCIATA AND MULTIPLE HEADS BY REGENERATION IN EUPLANARIA TIGRINA. By ROBERT H. SILBER and VIKTOR HAMBURGER, Washington University.

Edited by W. C. ALLEE, Professor of Zoölogy, The University of Chicago. Published Quarterly by the University of Chicago Press.

Subscription : 35s. 2d. per year.

English Agents : **CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**